

Cayuga County Convention & Visitors Bureau
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
March 3, 2026
Via Zoom

Present: Erin Katzker, Kate Grindstaff, Doug Dello Stritto, Amber Gansert-Dagnesi, Kari Terwilliger, Mike Riley, Meg Goloub, Jacob Hamilton, AnnaMarie Vukmanovich, Diana Plue, Brian DiBernardo, Aileen McNabb-Coleman

Staff: Courtney Kasper, Hilary Fenner, Dawn Lubaszewski, Noah Howard, Lynne Sweet,

Absent:

Kate Pelkey

Excused:

Kristen Lunkenheimer-Slocum, Jackie Schnurr Jessica Schneider, Ahna Wilson, Laura Hahn, Stephen Selvek

Presiding Officer: E. Katzker

Secretary: A. Vukmanovich

The meeting was called to order at 8:33am by E. Katzker

I. Approval of Minutes

The February minutes were presented for approval.

A motion to approve the February minutes, was made by J. Hamilton, seconded by A. Gansert - Dagnesi. All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

III. Treasurer's Report (D. Dello Stritto)

As forecasted, the fourth quarter occupancy tax disbursement hasn't been made yet and this is reflected in the financials. Adjustments were made last fall to accommodate this.

A motion to approve the Treasurer's Report was made by K. Terwilliger, seconded by A. Gansert-Dagnesi. All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

IV. Committee Reports

(a) Executive (C. Kasper):

C. Kasper reported that she and Doug DelloStritto met with Chairman Anna, Legislator Elane Daly, Treasurer Dave Dempsey, and Deputy Treasurer Jessica Mull. The group discussed short-term rentals, including current compliance requirements and the potential implementation of a registration fee. They also reviewed a possible path forward regarding the allocation percentage of occupancy tax revenues received by the County and the Tourism Office. C. Kasper attended a software demonstration with Deckard Technologies regarding short-term rental registration and compliance and will continue research and working with surrounding counties and Cayuga County municipalities for a collaborative solution to ensure new and existing STRs are compliant.

(b) Education (M. Riley):

No Report

(c) Advocacy (K. Grindstaff):

K. Grindstaff reported on current advocacy initiatives, including the second fundraising incubator held in partnership with Charlene Tarver. She also noted that the 2026 event grant program will expand its scope to create additional opportunities to attract visitors to the county. C. Kasper presented the second installment of a five-part monthly video series focused on tourism in Cayuga County, emphasizing the industry's economic impact.

Formatted: Indent: Left: 0.75"

(c) **HR (J. Hamilton):**

No Report

(d) **Audit & Financing (A. Gansert Dagnesi):**

No Report

(e) **Planning (K. Terwilliger):**

K. Terwilliger reports that there is an extended stay hotel proposal for Grant Ave in Auburn.

A motion to approve the committee reports was made by A. Hamilton and seconded by K. Grindstaff. All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

IV. Marketing (H. Fenner)

H. Fenner reported significant outreach from the bus tour group seeking information on parking and dining options. The upcoming *Sweet Treat Trail* brochure will feature a bus icon to identify bus-friendly partners. In addition, instead of hosting a market takeover, we will be tabling at participating Sweet Treat Trail partner businesses.

We are currently in discussions with Nia Boothman about joining us as a tourism ambassador and micro-influencer. This initiative aligns with our strategic plan.

We also secured 26 placements in the *Where You Go Matters* campaign by taking advantage of last-minute Olympic advertising rates. The ads aired during the hockey gold medal game, providing added visibility. Final performance metrics will be available at our next meeting.

Social media performance remains strong, particularly on Instagram. The Hibernation campaign is wrapping up and has performed well. Hilary will be tabling at The Sinclair of Skaneateles Wedding Show in April to assess opportunities within the wedding market and determine how we can better position ourselves in that segment.

VI. PR (N. Howard):

N. Howard reported that FAM alum Kwasi Hope launched a month-long Black History Month content series highlighting Harriet Tubman in Auburn. His first post alone generated more than 100,000 organic views. Two FAM tours are currently being planned in collaboration with TAP, both centered-on Harriet Tubman. In addition, numerous press releases were distributed throughout February, including coverage of the first-ever Crow Caucus Convention; Brave Woman Week across the Finger Lakes, which is helping drive attention to the upcoming Brave Brews Festival; and the She Sessions music series at Lunkenheimer Craft Brewing Co.

VII. Executive Director (C. Kasper):

C. Kasper shared insights from our January Zartico data, noting that food and beverages continue to rank highest in visitor spending. In response, we will enhance our Cayuga Cuisine promotion and produce additional videos to further support this interest. The data also shows a growing trend in rural tourism and agritourism. The upcoming FAM visit with Pustika Samadar will focus on highlighting these experiences, as they continue to gain popularity. Unique stays are also trending among visitors. On the financial side, we received reimbursement from the Go Beyond Market NY Grant totaling just over \$37,000, with a second payment of \$12,000 still

forthcoming. We also received our matching funds check. The occupancy tax overpayment will be reconciled with our Q1 payment, which has already been vouchered. Now that the county contract has been signed, we expect payment shortly. The projected shortfall is lower than originally anticipated. Through FLRTC, America 250 graphics and banners will be made available to all municipalities across the Finger Lakes Region, providing shared branding assets to support regional participation and promotion. A press release will be going out shortly. A collaborative coloring book has also been created with FLRTC, with our contribution being a Harriet Tubman page.

A motion to approve the Marketing, Public Relations and Executive Director reports was made by A. Gansert-Dagnesi and seconded by D. Dello Stritto. All were in favor, and the motion was approved.

VI. Unfinished Business (E. Katzker):
None

VII. Announcements:

- **Gansert-Dagnesi -Charcuterie board class at Mackenzie Childs Saturday March 21st.**
- **Noah: March 10th is Harriet Tubman day, with events commemorating at Equal Rights Heritage center and the National Park**
- **E. Katzker: The Rev is working with IOA and Skan Fields to offer a deal with guests**
- **K. Grinstaff: America 250 programs are on website; Brave Brews Festival is this coming weekend.**
- **D. Dello Stritto: Joined Friends of Emerson to Albany for Parks Advocacy Day to meet with elected officials.**

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made at 9:40 am by K. Terwilliger and seconded by A. Gansert-Dagnesi. All were in favor and the meeting adjourned.

Approved by A. Vukmanovich

Recorded by Lynne Sweet